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Suggested Descriptions of Roles for Personnel

Rhode Island Department of Education

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Explanation and Considerations for Use

This document provides some suggestions for the descriptions/roles of adults as you develop your graduation portfolio system. The following roles and descriptions are suggestions only. Review the specific needs at your own school and create the roles and responsibilities that will best help to implement a graduation portfolio in your school. You will have to review the needs at your school and create roles and responsibilities specific to your school personnel.

Suggested Descriptions of Roles for Personnel

The following roles and descriptions are suggestions only. Review the specific needs at your own school and create the roles and responsibilities that will best help to implement a Graduation Portfolio in your school.

Students are primarily responsible for building their own portfolios. In doing so, they will become more independent learners and should be able to answer the question, "Why are we doing this anyway?" While the students need to have that responsibility, they will also need a good deal of guidance and support, and clearly defined consequences for failure to comply,

Teachers need to learn how to improve the ability of students to be independent learners. In the short term, teachers are responsible for providing the opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills and knowledge. This means that teachers need to provide tasks that are linked to the school's Expectations for Student Learning and create opportunities for students to learn the required skills and knowledge. More detail is provided in the section on task development, but teachers can begin by identifying or developing 2 to 4 valid and reliable tasks from each course that fit into their curriculum and generate good evidence of student learning.

In the long term, teachers need to help students reflect on their work, help students determine their progress towards the school's Expectations for Student Learning and point students to opportunities for further learning. Teachers will need to learn how to support independent learning.

Principals and other school leaders need to provide the appropriate supports. This includes schedules, providing time for professional development and opportunities for faculty to work together, and if the school is using an electronic portfolio system obtaining and maintaining sufficient technology to support student and teacher use of the system. This may involve bringing in external professional development around portfolios, task development, technology, etc.

In addition, principals also play a key role in defining the message of what the portfolio is for and how it fits in the Diploma System. In schools where the portfolio has been successful, the school leadership has regularly provided clear and ongoing communication with students, parents, faculty, administrators and board members.

The portfolio project coordinator(s) provides leadership for and communication about the specific activities associated with implementing the portfolio. The coordinator needs to be able to provide logistical support (e.g., scheduling computer lab time, changing computer access policy, or finding space for portfolio reviews). More importantly, though, the coordinator helps to link the various aspects of the project (technology, assessment, task development, etc.) to other activities in the school, especially to other state Graduation by Proficiency initiatives. This can be at the school or district level. Most schools have found that (at least in the initial years) a coordinator must be available at least part-time.

Guidance counselors and advisors monitor the progress of students in the portfolio process and ensure that a student's course of study provides the opportunities needed to meet all proficiencies and align with ASCA, k-12 Comprehensive Counseling, etc.